

Shelton State Courier presents

Maxwell's Crossing

A Literary and Fine Arts Publication

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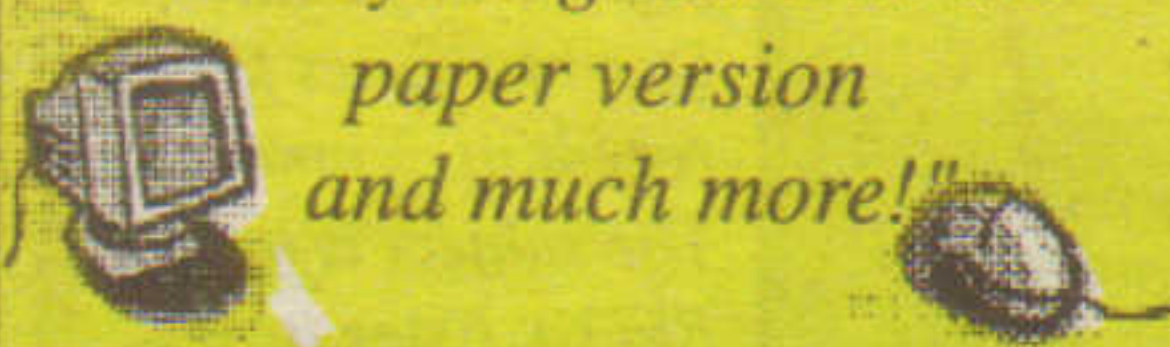
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Come on, baby, douse my fire

A Short Story Based On an Incident 30 Some Years Ago

By Ben Herdman

It was bitterly cold for Alabama weather. My old buddy Mike and I were standing on a Birmingham street corner, trying to figure out what to do next. I could have cared less about what we did or where we went, just as long as we got out of the cold. The frostbite was getting out of hand, and if we didn't do something about it, I was going to be just as uncontrollable. Mike was being extremely indecisive that night, so I gave him a couple of not-so-subtle suggestions.

"Listen, Mike, just make up your mind!" I barked like a toddler demanding a lollipop. "I can't even feel my head anymore." I pointed to the nearest venue. "Let's just go in here."

The place was dead. There were only a few people in there; a couple of young men and an older guy who

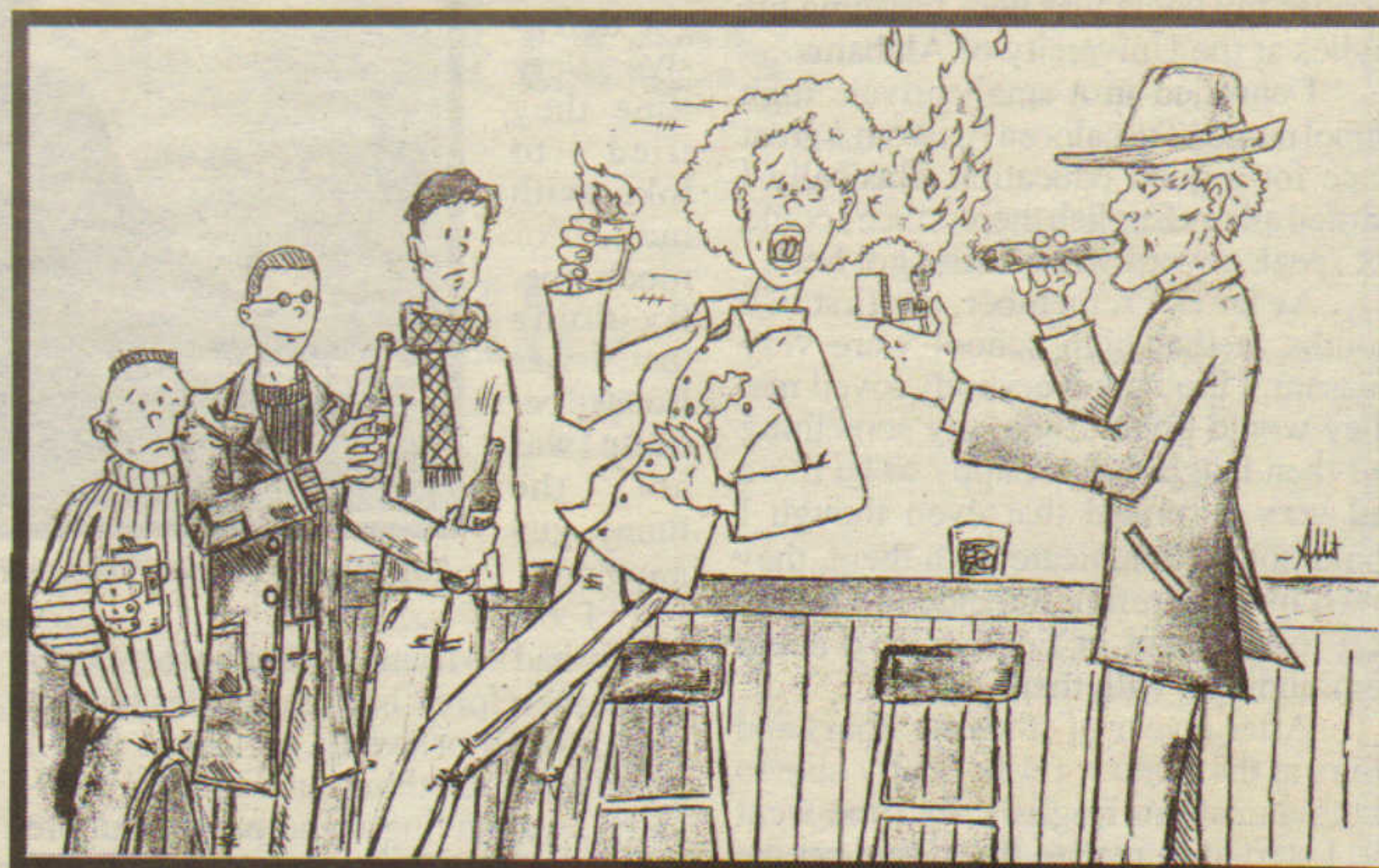


Illustration by Abbot

looked like a Bear Bryant impersonator. The older fellow gave us a cordial greeting as we walked through the door.

"Hello there, boys. Looks like it's just us guys in here tonight. Let

me buy you kids a drink." He turned to the bartender. "Jimmy, let me get two flaming shots of blueberry

Douse cont'd on pg. 6



"daydreams"

This photo, taken at an abandoned house in Moundville, is the work of Shelton photography I student Rochelle Bidlofsky. The Florida native is majoring in occupational therapy.

To the Clubhouse

A Short Story
A Yip is as Good as a Howl to a Dead Woolf

By Boz Carpentier

"So when Joanna Z. Booth's husband came in we were sure he had a shotgun with him in the car. I was like 'No way, man!'"

"What? He scared you?" I asked, in a terrorized voice I wasn't sure was "mock" or not. I reached to turn on our main computer, but was distracted.

"Oh, no...Like... I want to die. You know that..." A hearty, staccato laugh, the trademark of Bantu Beanz, the newly adopted pen name of Shaunnesy Smythe, my pet maniac writer.

"What was the problem then?" I laughed freely, delightedly, because I hadn't been there at all. I had missed the greatest day of actual drama in my career as a publisher of college newspapers. It had been a fitting end to the most wild and creative semester I had ever had with the craziest, most potential-laden staff. An

actual confrontation. A whiff of chaos. "It was Ladybird. I thought he was going to kill her when I was sure he meant to kill you!"

We both laughed; after all the danger seemed to have completely passed.

Beanz, what he called himself and we all called him, explained that all Joanna Z. Booth, our lifestyle writer, had ever told her huge, brutish husband is that she loved to write and was going to become a journalist her own self. "I guess along with being a journalist comes the refusal to wash dishes and wipe kids' —"

Our humor columnists walked in at that moment. He had gotten his job entirely because of his startling looks. But it had proven a felicitous choice, for it turned out he could write a bit anyway. He must have the longest hair on a guy anywhere in the state of —. I think he grows it to his thighs because short hair is in right now. If and when the style changes again, I'm sure Henry Avery

Clubhouse cont'd on pg. 3

Learning American

An Autobiographical Essay

By Kun Hee Park

I left Sao Paulo, Brazil on March 12, 1997. I was born in Korea but when I was five years old my family moved to Sao Paulo where I spent 12 years of my life. Therefore I was 17 years old when I came to Tuscaloosa to study English with my older brother. I came to Tuscaloosa because my uncle was here finishing his studies at the University of Alabama.

I enrolled in a small private high school named Tuscaloosa Academy, a great place for a good education. Basically I learned all my English there, since I could not speak a word when I first got here.

As far as I remember, the first two months in that high school were very pleasant. I thought everybody loved me. They would point at me, say something and then laugh. I was happy to be there and very surprised that even though I could not communicate with them, they loved me. Therefore I decided to do my best to be fluent in English, so I could communicate with them.

After a year of studying hours and hours at the library, I was finally able to communicate in English. As time went by, I started to realize that some people were just making fun of me during all that first year when I thought they used to love me. The difference became clear one particular day.

There was this guy named C. and he used to be the funny guy in that school. He used to say something to me every time when I passed him at the hall going to my classes.

That day at break time I was in the hall, when he and some other guys came to me and told me to repeat the word "beach." I did not know why, but I did it. However, at the same time I had repeated the word, one teacher was walking behind me and I almost got in trouble for saying that word.

After that day, I was sure that most of people were just making fun of me. I felt cheated, stupid and got angry at myself. Also I was very offended by them who were just making fun of me because I was trying the best I could to learn my third language. I started to get defensive every time they tried to joke with me or mock me. By doing that, I was isolated because I was not the funny guy anymore.

I basically had no friends. I was on the soccer team; therefore I had teammates but not a real friend or even a colleague who I could ask something. In addition, ironically, I was having a whole other culture shock inside of my uncle's house. My uncle and his family were from Korea. I did not know very much about the Korean culture until then. Because my dad, unlike other Korean parents, used to think that since we were in Brazil we should learn about the Brazilian culture. My dad is a very open-minded person about everything. He never really forced me to learn the Korean manners and cultures. Also he was the one who first suggested that we should come to U.S to learn English and experience some difficulties while we were still young.

In my uncle's house we had to speak Korean, eat Korean food (which I used to hate) and follow the Korean culture. However, I was not educated

this way when I was growing up. I had a difficult time even when I was home from school. Even though my uncle and my aunt were nice to us, my brother and I got an apartment to live on our own because of the differences of culture.

There were times that I hated myself, because if I had accepted the jokes I would at least have had friends. However, most of the time, I was proud of my actions because I was standing

up for myself, not letting me just become their pet. I considered going back to Brazil several times. There, I had family, my friends who I grew up with, and my home. However, I had my goals to accomplish here, which were to learn English as well as I know Portuguese, to make American friends and to learn more about the American culture.

While I was struggling with culture shocks, homesickness and language problems, I met Vincent Shakir. He was a transfer student from Chicago. He was also my first American friend in Tuscaloosa. Shakir said recently, "Michael was my first friend in Tuscaloosa. He was the first guy from the Academy who spoke to me on my first day of school."

Shakir also played soccer, and even though he was a transfer student he became very popular in school. I got really close to Shakir, and he helped me out a lot during my difficulties. After all these

years, we are still best friends.

I graduated from Tuscaloosa Academy in 1999. I was going to go to another state University for soccer, but I decided to stay in Tuscaloosa because I did not want to start all over again, and also because my brother was already studying at the UA.

When I enrolled at Alabama, I was happy and excited again. I was glad that a new stage of my life was beginning, and that this time I was able to communicate and I knew a little more about American culture.

At the University, I met a lot of American colleagues. They were very nice to me at school, but for some reason they would never really invite me to do anything outside the class room. I really did not want to have the same experience that I had in high school. Therefore I opened my mind a little bit more and tried not to be defensive.

It was still hard to make friends. People were always very kind and friendly, but there was a "wall" I could not break. I realized that American people, especially in the South, are very friendly, but it seemed to me that they did not really want to mix or to accept me. That's why probably most international students like me can feel unaccepted.

Even at the University, people did not believe where I was from. I really did not understand why it was so hard to believe that I was from Brazil. Also I could not understand how the color of my skin and the size of my eyes could tell people everything about me without their even speaking a word to me. When I was in Brazil nobody really asked me where I was from, and I never felt that I was different from my Brazilian friends. Maybe this was because I grew up with



Kun Hee Park in Rio De Janeiro.

American cont'd on pg. 4

Maxwell's Crossing

Shelton State Courier

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Publisher: Dr. Jim Kenny

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The *Shelton State Courier* is a "campus newspaper" written and produced with the help of students.

Among other functions, it is intended as a vehicle for student expression and all students are urged to participate

with submissions of written and artistic material.

The college seeks to fulfill the statement for academic freedom in working with the students in the production of this paper:

"The college seeks to provide an atmosphere conducive to open and honest intellectual inquiry in any college forum which is appropriate for dialogue and student participation.

The students should feel free to exercise the right to dissent within limits of decorum and good taste."

All publications are subject to review by the Publications Action Group, which has been delegated the responsibility to review all college publications for content and accuracy.

The *Courier* is an equal opportunity employer and student organization.

All students are encouraged to participate.



"Rocko"

This photograph was taken by Shelton State student Sparrow Estes for a recent assignment. The subject is her dog, Rocko. Estes is minoring in photography.

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Club cont'd from pg. 1

will shave his head completely.

"Henry, what's going on, son?" I cried out, always careful to encourage and acknowledge our high-strung humorist. The computer didn't come on.

"They hated me last night at the pep rally."

"Good." In an ironic singsong: "But I hope you didn't — them off to the detriment of the *Messenger*!" I referred to the paper I had been hired to publish, the latest in a long string, in an oddly fulfilling career.

As always, my warning was ignored completely. He told me the tale of the usual jeering and vituperation. I nodded enthusiastically all the while, but I was also giving eye-encouragement to the staffer we called Beacon, our red-headed Zen Buddhist, who had slid through the door.

Beacon, known to his parents still as Charlie Royal, had, as usual, left his beautiful girlfriend outside in the hall. (I had seen this phenomenon before: where the most beautiful female in any given gene pool chooses the male with the most disdain for beautiful women. I had always attributed it to Nature's odd but knowing way.)

These three immediately started jousting with each other, as they always did. I loved it, but it made me nervous.

Beanz said, "Henry, they hated you last night, man!"

Henry tossed his hair ungirlishly and just grinned. "They just hated that I was there. I didn't say anything really."

"Didn't say anything! You called all of them simple-minded —."

"Let them have their games," Beacon said. Beacon had earned his nickname by virtue of two outstanding characteristics: he had the most interesting head anybody had ever seen—nearly shaved red hair that gathered and reflected light in an eerie luminescence—and his humorous but insistent pointing of the Zen way toward truth and life. The great thing was the way he and Beanz, a rabid atheist, got on together. The other intriguing thing was the way Hairy Henry brought out the strangest best in both of them.

The few minutes between classes turned into comic free-for-alls that fostered both healthy competitiveness and debilitating entropy.

I thought of my unifying refrain, the one I always used when two or more of my special-semester students gathered together and started to give each other or me a hard time. "Now, you be good, and at the end of the semester we're going to go to the Country Club and have lunch!"

They all focused on me.

"Oh, Master Dawes, you always say that," Beanz pointed out. "Be good and we'll go to the country club for lunch." I'm

sure you would have said the same thing to John Booth had you been there when he brought his shotgun in."

They all called me Master Daws since the first day of the semester when I told Beanz I had a Masters degree in journalism. He had jumped all over that.

"John Booth? His name was John Booth as in *John Wilkes Booth*?" I asked. They all laughed.

"No, that's just what Beanz called him," Beacon said.

"Besides, he didn't have a shotgun on him," Henry said. "—, he wasn't even upset. Beanz made it all up!"

They all laughed and left. Supposedly they were all going to class, but, somehow, I just couldn't see that.

"Hey, Beanz. Hey, Beacon. Hey, Henry." It was Ladybird D.P., our editor, walking in. She is smarter than Marilyn vos Savant in *Parade* magazine. Her real last name is something like Dramacalopopolis. Something Greek, anyway. In high school in a small town about 50 miles from here they had called her Dramatis Personae since the 9th grade when her class read their first play. Since starting college, she has gone by her middle name and tacked on D.P. after it. Turned out the genius had liked Dramatis Personae, but wanted a change for college.

She sat down at the big desk. "Master, we have a prob-

lem with this issue."

"We always have a problem with every issue," I said. This was true, too.

"Yes, I know. But this problem goes beyond the inability of our staff to write coherent sentences. The problem is serious. It's the Macintosh. It died. I felt myself having a heart

attack.

"Come along. Come on in. Have a seat. I'm glad you could all make it. It was Jack's final wish that you have this luncheon."

"You know, he always talked 'bout 'goin'...to the clubhouse," said a redheaded young man, dressed in a splendid pinstriped suit. "I appreciate your letting me bring my fiance' along." The young fellow patted the hand of a subdued young lady, whose head remained bowed.

"You know, we called him master, kind of as a joke. But he really was a master," said another of the somber young people who were about to sit down at a beautifully set table for eight. "Balance. Balance is the key to a happy life. Find your balance—and you can still be funny. He taught me that. He absent-mindedly patted the side of his head, as if in search of something that was no longer there.

Seven of the eight seats were now taken. The older man who had spoken first now rose.

"Who's missing? I don't want anyone to miss this."

One young lady—of the three present—lifted her eyes and stared vacantly at the older fellow. "It's Lacy. Our business manager. She had a math final. She'll be here if it doesn't kill her."

Stunned silence. Every head bowed, every eye seemed afraid to cross paths with any other. After three minutes, the silence was about to reach epic proportions when, finally, someone broke it.

"I propose we say a prayer for Master Dawes," said another somberly dressed young man.

"Beanz! You're an atheist!" said the third woman at the table.

"Call me Shaunnesy. I'm giving up that Beanz ---. Hey, and you've got no bruises on your face. Good for you, Joanna Z."

The young woman smiled beatifically. "Yeah, I figure if Master Dawes could change his life. I could, too!"

Giggles all around.

Just then a young woman ran up to the table. "What are you laughing at?" she asked. She looked around the table furiously. "I don't think death is funny."

The woman who had seemed the most dumbstruck a

Clubhouse cont'd on pg. 4

"Believe"

By Victoria L. Brown

If there comes a time when you lose faith, Think about your past and slow your pace.

"Believe" that you serve a purpose in life, keep your head up and continue to strive.

Reach out to the goals you have set and maintain to seek, Never let anyone get you down. Good only goes to the strong and the devil plays on the weak. Every chance that you get

Get down on your knees, And ask the Lord to please Forgive.

To give you another chance, And take the route that has already been planned; To be a father and a man.

I promise, this He will see, if you try, and He will understand.

"Believe" me, He cares, Let Him know that you are truly strong, From then on,

a better life will come.

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American cont'd from pg. 2

them and Portuguese was basically my first language.

Now, I have been here more than five years and made friendships with American and international people. It was easier to build friendships with international students. I broke the "wall" by playing soccer on the University Men's soccer team.

I got so close to my teammates that I do not get offended anymore when they joke about me. Because now I know they do not really mean it.

Sometimes I think that I should have accepted the jokes from my high school peers more often. But then, I think that I did what I had to do. Yet I do not blame them at all. I know now that it is kind of funny to have a foreign student who does not understand any English and looks lost most of the time.

Apparently, some other students thought that I believed I was too cool to hang out with them, since I did not talk to them. Brett Rasco, one of my teammates for my high school soccer team, said: "I did not talk to you because I thought that you used to think you were better than us since you did not speak to us and were a better soccer player than us."

I only met Rasco at Shelton State, three years after I graduated from high school.

I am sure there are other international students like me, who come here to study and find difficulties making American friends. Some break the wall like I did, but most of them are never accepted. As matter of fact, I have some international friends who think that American people discriminate against them. However, I know from my experience that their assumptions are wrong.

After being here this long, I have learned a lot about life. I learned how to deal with culture shocks, learned about Korean and American cultures and made true friends from all over the world. I do not think it matters that much where you from, how you look, where you are, or even how people judge you. What truly matters, in my opinion, are how you treat others and how open-minded you are to a person who is not.

About friends and culture shocks I believe I have an answer that fits for me and my life. However, sometimes I ask myself if it was worth giving up everything that I had to come here. I know we

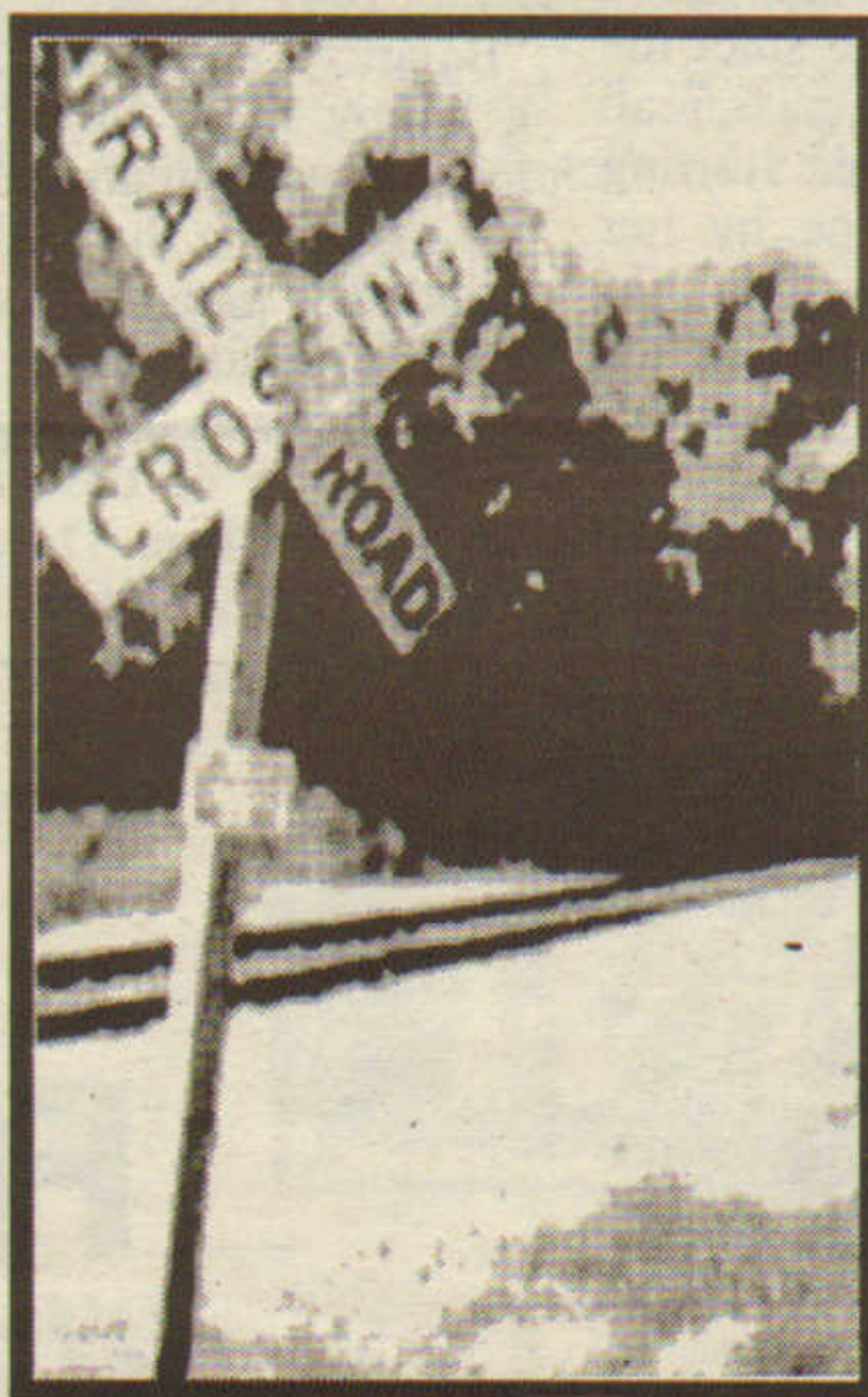
all have to make sacrifices in order to get something, but my question is: How do I know for sure if it was a right decision to



Michael Park with his family in Los Angeles, Calif. Pictured (L-R), Gabriel Park, Paulo Park, Catarina Park and Michael Park.

come here?

I know and feel that I have grown a lot as a person. I learned to deal with people, learned the language and learned from my own experiences how big the world we live in is.



This railroad track can be found in Coalfire, Ala. The photo was taken by Sparrow Estes.

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The Mask

By Robert Milz

Jealous, alone, abandoned, ashamed
Rage all consuming, love cast aside
My thoughts entrap me in loneliness
I feel nothing, I'm barely alive.

The mask it wears bleeds thick with pain
It wears you more as each day brings
The hurt for which you cannot change.

Motivation brought from within
Drive stronger, trying harder, proving wrong
Each day I walk farther.

Relating back to unravel the seed
I find myself pondering
The why and what for.

The mask consumes it still
He will never see
And that is what cuts deeper
What drives the stake farther
What twists the knife harder.

What hurts the most
Is that he will never see
The mask consumes him
As it consumes me.

Clubhouse cont'd from pg. 3

few moments before roused herself and smiled. It was Joanna Z. Booth, Lacy. She said Master Dawes had the courage to change his life..."

The late-arriving young woman sat down and put a crisp napkin on her lap and giggled. "I guess Master Dawes would laugh, too. He sure did change his life."

After a few more titters, someone proposed a toast. "To Master Dawes. He never missed a deadline."

They all lifted their heavy, glistening water glasses. The older man said, "We could have had some Champagne, but you're not 21, so this will have to do."

"I'm over 21," said the woman who had explained the joke to Lacy, the latecomer.

"I'm over 21," said a male voice.

"All right, you caught me. Jack didn't leave enough money in his will to pat for a glass of wine," said the older man.

"That cheap ---," said the red-headed young man. "Never missed a deadline. But now he's just dead." His eyes shifted around the table to see, apparently, if anyone thought he was funny. But no one laughed.

Just when everyone else had a mouthful of water, the petite, down-cast beauty put down her glass with an exaggerated show of disgust, saying, "And now her's killing me."

Her timing was perfect. Everybody spewed.

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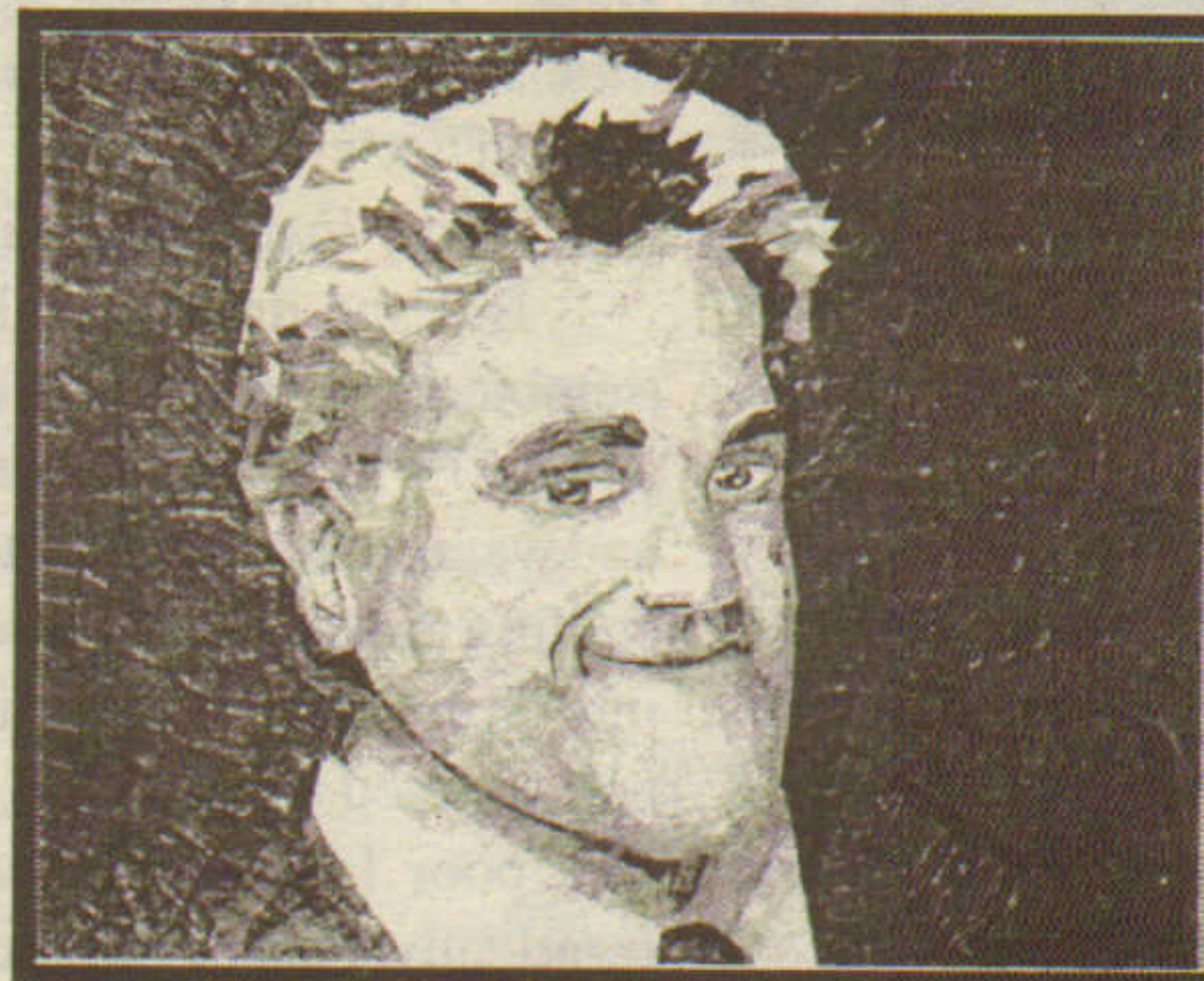
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"Ground Zero"

This photo was taken at Ground Zero in downtown Tuscaloosa by Shelton photography I student Clinton MacKinnon. Majoring in studio arts, with an emphasis on photography, MacKinnon will be taking photography II at Shelton next semester.



"Jay Leno"

Shelton student Jonathan King created this collage piece by cutting different colors out of magazines into thousands of small squares and triangles and strategically gluing them to create a realistic portrait. The process took about six weeks. King is majoring in journalism and will be returning to Shelton next semester.



"Solitude"

This drawing was created by Shelton student Juanita Dawkins.

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"Grazing Pastures"

Shelton student Jimmy Winters created this piece using prism color pencils. Winters will be attending Shelton next semester with a technical scholarship and is majoring in commercial arts and design.

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Douse cont'd from pg. 1

brandy." The codger warned us, "It's an acquired taste, boys, but you'll get the hang of it. Just make sure that you shoot it swiftly, or else you might burn yourselves."

"No arguments here," I said. "Everything tastes better when it's free. Very appreciated."

Jimmy poured the shots and ignited them with a match. We all raised our glasses in camaraderie and shot the drinks. "That's what I call a hot shot," Mike said as he rubbed his belly.

"My name is Grey, Charlie Grey," the stranger said as he shook our hands. "Would you boys care for another?"

"Is that a trick question, Grey?" I laughed.

"Enough said, kid. I got you covered."

A woman of about thirty had just walked in and parked herself next to me. She was clearly inebriated. She smelled of stale alcohol, perfume, and hairspray, all with an overtone of cigarette smoke.

"And what's your name, missy?" Grey asked.

"Maddy," she said.

"I'm Charlie," he shot back with an extended hand. "Let me buy you a drink, Maddy. Jimmy, my boy!" he boomed in his low, raspy voice, "Make that one more brandy for the pretty lady."

Maddy thanked him and grabbed the shot

glass. "I've never had one of these before. It's a little scary, being on fire and all."

"That's okay, Miss Maddy. Just put it away fast," Grey instructed, supervising from behind.

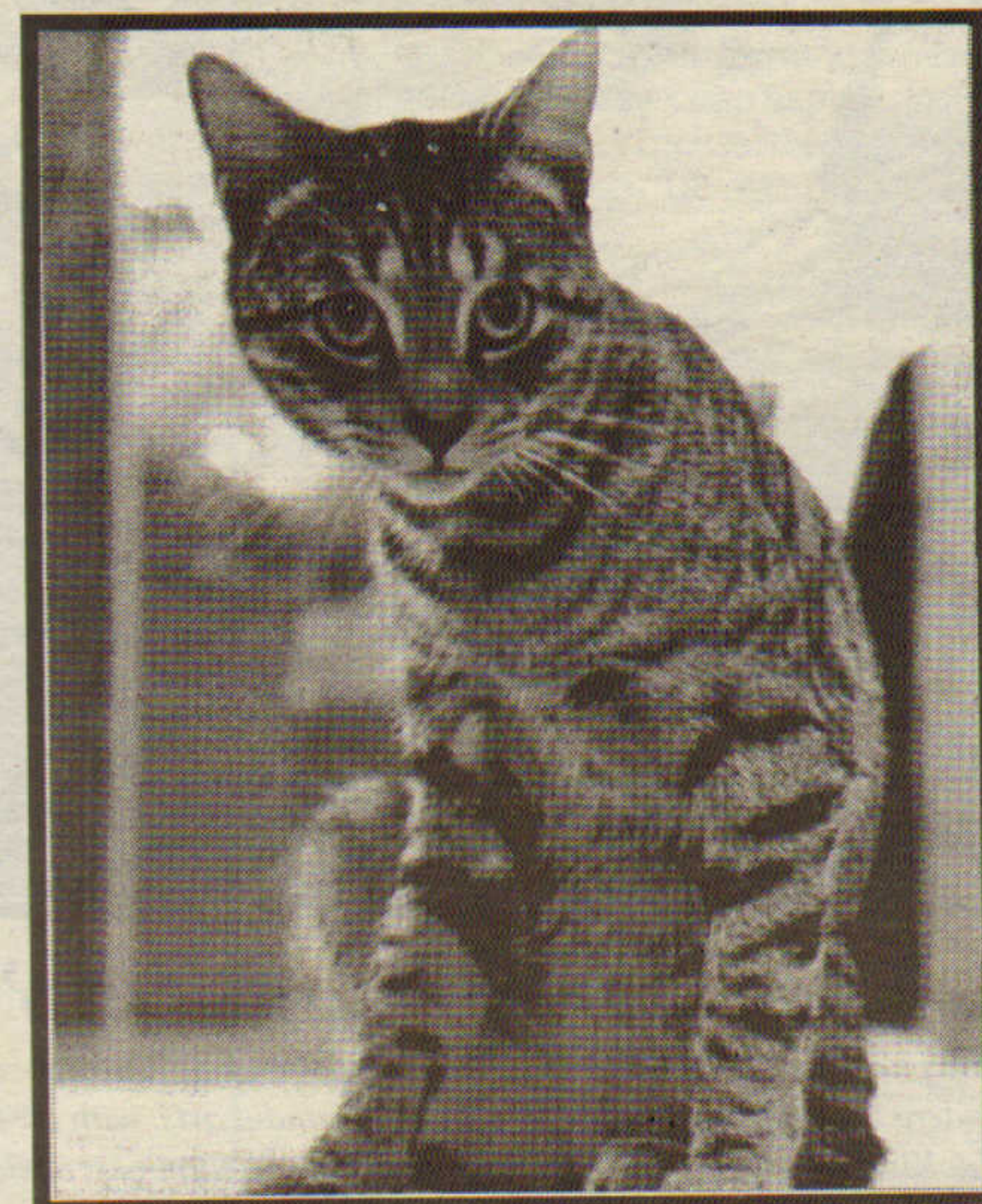
But she didn't drink it quickly enough. She trembled as she raised it slowly toward her lips — and ZAPP! She had burned her mouth, just as Grey had warned us before. Maddy stumbled backwards, spilling the drink on her white blouse and bumping into Grey just as he was lighting a cigar. Her frizzy hair, doused in hairspray, caught fire immediately. The poor lady freaked and ran through the bar frantically, patting her flaming head to kill the ever-growing fire, but to no avail.

"My God! Somebody put her out!" cried Grey.

In a flash Jimmy, who'd been virtually silent the whole time, hopping over the bar like a kung fu fighter, tackled Maddy to the floor, and extinguished the flames with a wet towel. Then our heroic bartender walked casually behind the counter like it was all in a night's work and resumed wiping down the bar top.

As Mike and I assisted Maddy to her feet we could see a faint cloud of smoke rise from the vestige of her hairdo, and the stench of singed hair swallowed the whole place. The way Maddy looked at the lot of us suggested she was about to say something, but she didn't say a word. She flitted out of the bar and out of sight. The embarrassment was too much to handle.

Grey sighed and shook his head. "Crap," he growled. "She almost broke my cigar. Who wants another brandy?"



"Do not Disturb"

This photo of Louie Estes was taken by Shelton photography I student Sparrow Estes for a recent class assignment.

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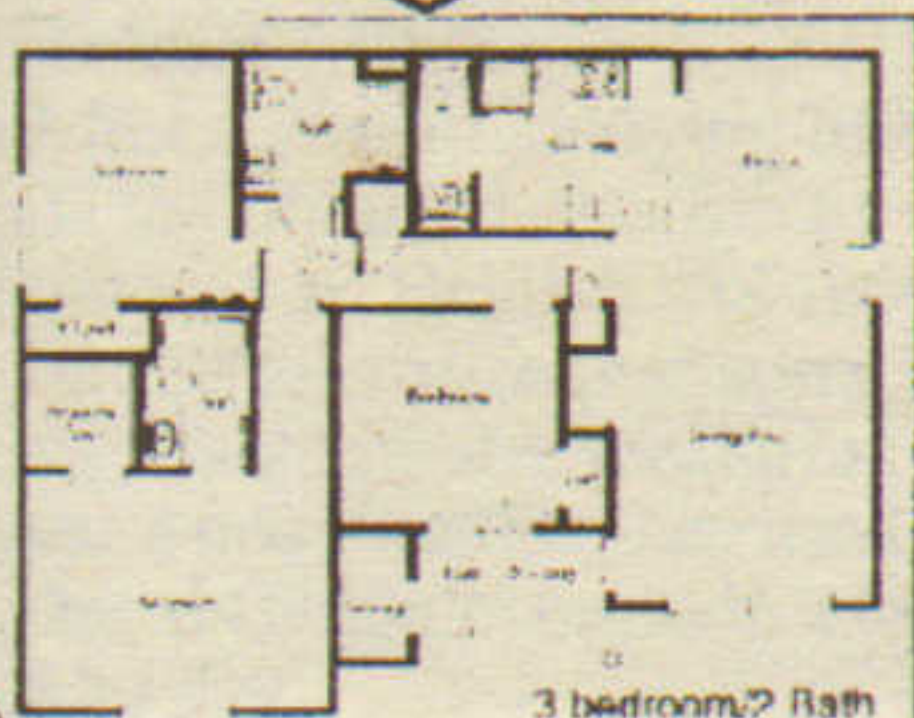
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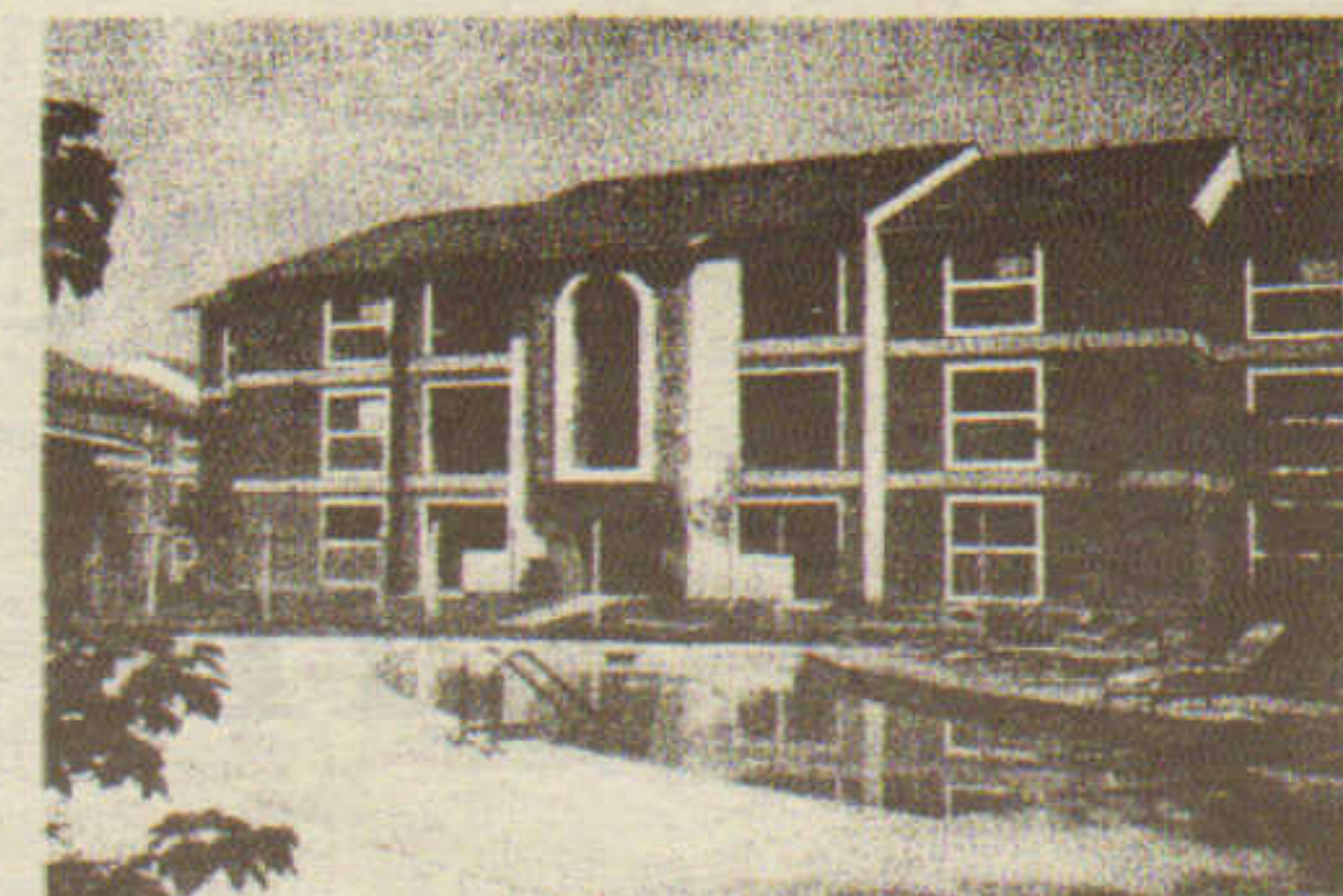
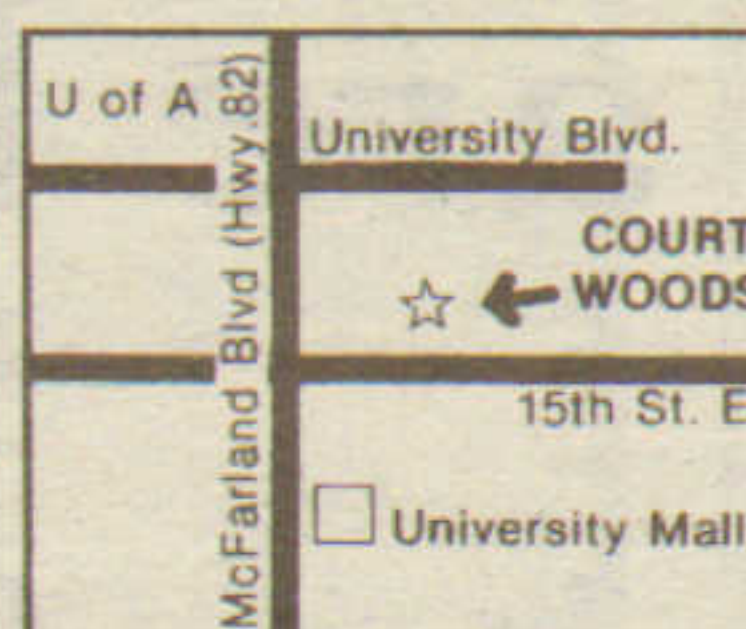
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